

# Request for Proposals

## Sheldon-Hart Mountain NWRC Feral Horse and Burro Adoption January 27, 2014

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Sheldon-Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex, requests proposals for contractors to care for and provide long-term homes for up to 500 feral horses and/or burros per year from the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. The Service plans to remove all feral horses and burros from the Sheldon Refuge within the next 4 years and the contractor may receive horses for placement in each of these 4 years. Because of the challenges of placing feral horses and burros in long-term homes, we are seeking innovative solutions to this problem. The Service is unable to pay for long-term holding. Payment for services will be made based on a per-animal fixed price that will be negotiated prior to entering into a contract; 80% will be paid on delivery and 20% paid when required documentation is provided to and approved by the Service. Proposals are welcome from any qualified individual, organization, or vendor willing to receive and provide long-term homes for a minimum of at least one shipment (approximately 36-40) of horses and/or burros to a maximum of all horses removed from the Refuge. Multiple vendors may be awarded contracts under this solicitation and numbers of horses shipped to each selected vendor will be at the discretion of the Service. Awards made through this solicitation will supplement existing contracts for feral horse and burro adoption.

Contractors will be required to provide feed, care, veterinary services, transportation, and provision of long-term homes. Pricing shall be submitted on a per animal basis. Pricing shall include transportation costs from the Refuge separately. Contractors will be allowed to charge fees to adopters to help offset costs; however, contractors will not be allowed to sell any animals at auction or for slaughter and must make a reasonable effort to screen potential adoptees for good homes and to prevent placement of animals with individuals that have the intention of selling them at auction or for slaughter. Acceptable long-term homes could include, but are not limited to, adoption of horses and burros as companion animals, work animals, and/or as rodeo stock, or placement at sanctuaries. Contractors may also maintain permanent possession of horses and burros if desired; but, no horses shall be released on any publicly owned or managed lands.

All captured horses will be permanently implanted by the Service with a unique identifying micro-chip prior to leaving the Refuge in order to allow the Service to track these animals. All male horses over one year old will be gelded by the Service before the Contractor is allowed to take possession.

All care, handling, transportation, and disposition of feral horses and burros will be in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications itemized below which will become part of any resultant contract. Prospective contractors must provide detailed proposals of the methods they intend to use to comply with these terms, conditions and specifications. In addition, all proposals should include a description of, and references pertinent to, experience in caring for and providing long-term homes for horses and/or burros.

Contract awards will be based on best value, price being significantly less important than the following factors:

- Access to necessary facilities
- Skills and knowledge in the safe handling of horses and burros
- Ability to care for and provide for long-term homes.

To make this determination, following review of all proposals received, the Service will screen highly qualified prospective contractors using the following:

1. A site visit to assure that the proposed facilities are adequate to prevent escape or injury to the animals or visitors during holding, viewing, loading, and unloading.
2. Interviews with at least two character witnesses.
3. A recommendation from a licensed veterinarian regarding the contractor's ability to accomplish the adoption process.

Terms, conditions, and specifications,

1. Contractor must provide for the care and safety of all animals and must take great care to ensure that long-term homes will provide the same level of care. Precautions will be taken to ensure that animals are not injured or killed.
2. Contractors will be allowed to charge fees to adopters to help offset costs; however, the contractor must make a reasonable effort to screen potential adoptees using an appropriate process to ensure good homes and to prevent placement of animals with individuals that have the intention of selling them at auction or for slaughter. Acceptable long-term homes could include, but are not limited to, adoption of horses and burros as companion animals, work animals, and/or as rodeo stock, or placement at sanctuaries. Contractors may also maintain permanent possession of horses and burros if desired but, no horses shall be released on any publicly owned or managed lands.
3. To ensure appropriate screening of adoptees, the contractor will inform all prospective adopters about the goals of the adoption program and will maintain documentation for each adoptee that includes a general description of their experience with horses and/or burros, facilities available to house and care for adopted horses and/or burros, and the

purpose/intent of the adoption (e.g., companion, rodeo stock, etc.). Such documentation will be provided to the Service upon request within 10 business days.

4. Contractor will keep records by horse micro-chip number of the disposition of all horses and/or burros including the name, address and telephone number for all individuals and companies adopting horses and burros, or in the case of any deaths, the cause of death or need for euthanasia. This information will be provided to the Service by December 31 each year and upon request within 10 business days. The Service reserves the right to contact any adoptee at any time at our sole discretion to ensure that animals are being placed in appropriate homes.
5. Contractor will provide medical care by a licensed veterinarian and farrier work when required. Animals requiring special care (e.g., mares with foals, newly weaned foals, sick or injured animals, etc.) will be separated. Records of all veterinary care will be maintained and provided to the Service upon request within 10 business days.
6. Contractor will provide good quality hay in the amount of two pounds per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day. Animals found to be losing weight will be separated and fed appropriately to ensure the animal maintains a healthy weight.
7. Contractor will provide fencing of stout materials having no projections or holes. Materials must be strong enough to prevent escape of animals.
8. Contractor shall provide a constant supply of fresh, clean water to each animal.
9. Contractor shall provide access to mineral blocks for all animals.
10. At any time, the Service or our agent may conduct unannounced inspections of the contractor's facilities to ensure the welfare and care of all Sheldon NWR horses and burros. The contractor will be required to implement reasonable animal husbandry recommendations we may make that result from those inspections.
11. Contractor will be paid on a per animal basis. Mares or jennets with foals will be counted as two animals for the purpose of payment.
12. Horses and burros transported by the contractor or their agents, including to their facilities, to adoption facilities or to other off-site destinations, will be transported in a single deck semi-trailer or stock trailers in accordance with all applicable State and Federal regulations. Transportation will be limited to maximum sequences of 24 hours followed by a minimum of 5 hours of on the ground rest with adequate feed and water. While contractors may provide the initial transportation of animals from the Refuge, this contract is not an exclusive right to transportation needs and the Service may use other vendors to provide such transportation.
13. The Service will conduct brand inspections and EIA (Coggins) testing on all animals before shipment from the Refuge and provide appropriate documentation according to State regulations.
14. All male horses over one year old will be gelded by the Service before shipment to the contractor. Upon request by the contractor, the Service, at our discretion, may waive this requirement for individual horses.

15. The Service will provide the contractor with HorseTrac registration paperwork at no cost as a courtesy for those adoptees wishing to register their animals. Contractors are encouraged to notify all adopters of this and provide adoptees with the prepaid registration forms if they are desired by the adoptee. However, micro-chips are intended to allow the Service to track animals removed from the Refuge and registration will not be required.